

Message Text

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ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 ARA-10 EA-10
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FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6913
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS

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EO 11652: NA
TAGS: SREF, VM
SUBJECT: VIETNAMESE REFUGEES ABOARD GREEK VESSEL LYDIA

REF: A) NAIROBI 6072, B) ATHENS 3318

1. UPON NOTIFICATION BY GREEK GOVERNMENT THAT IT WOULD
GUARANTEE ONWARD MOVEMENT, THE GOVERNMENT OF KENYA HAS
AGREED TO PERMIT THE 51 VIETNAMESE REFUGEES ABOARD THE
LYDIA TO ENTER KENYA FOR A MAXIMUM OF THREE MONTHS. THE
UNHCR HAS ALSO GIVEN GOK ASSURANCE THAT RESETTLEMENT IN
OTHER COUNTRIES WILL BE ARRANGED WITHIN THAT TIME.

2. ACCORDING TO LOCAL UNHCR OFFICE, THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT
HAS EXPRESSED A WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT 20-25 REFUGEES, AND AN
IMMIGRATION OFFICER FROM THE CANADIAN HIGH COMMISSION IS
INTERVIEWING THEM IN MOMBASA AT THIS TIME. ACCORDING TO
REP OF AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION, GOVERNMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HAS NOT MADE ANY OFFER TO ACCEPT VIETNAMESE REFUGEES.
DESPITE THAT, HIGH COMMISSION REP VISITED SHIP AND
ASCERTAINED NO RPT NO REFUGEES WANTED TO RESETTLE
IN AUSTRALIA.

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3. UNHCR REP INFORMS US THAT FRENCH AND ITALIAN
EMBASSIES ARE AWAITING REPLIES FROM PARIS AND ROME
BEFORE MAKING COMMITMENTS.

4. COMMENT: WE CAN ONLY SECOND THE COMMENTS OF SHIP
OWNER GEORGIADIS (REPORTED IN ATHENS 3284) CONCERNING

THE APPARENT CONFLICT IN U.S. POLICY IN DEALING WITH VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE. U.S. "CONCERN" FOR WELFARE OF REFUGEES HAS NOT BEEN REFLECTED IN OUR ACTIONS IN THIS CASE. WHILE WE WERE INSTRUCTED TO LECTURE KENYAN GOVERNMENT ON ITS RESPONSIBILITIES, OTHER COUNTRIES WERE ACTIVELY DOING SOMETHING TO PROVIDE FOR REFUGEES' FUTURE. U.S. REFUSAL TO HELP BEAR BURDEN HAS BEEN CRITICIZED IN BOTH GOVERNMENT AND DIPLOMATIC CIRCLES. WE HAVE LOOKED HYPOCRITICAL AND INEFFECTIVE AND OTHERS HAVE NOTICED.

4. FROM THIS EXPERIENCE, WE WOULD SUGGEST THAT USG REFRAIN FROM MAKING PLEAS ON BEHALF OF BOAT PEOPLE WITH SHIPOWNERS/CAPTAINS OR OTHER GOVERNMENTS UNTIL WE ARE PREPARED TO PLAY A DIRECT ROLE IN ASSURING RECEPTION OF BOAT PEOPLE ONCE THEY HAVE LANDED.
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Message Attributes

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